

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 10, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science and Related
Agencies
Senate Dirksen Building, 142
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science and Related
Agencies
Senate Hart Building, 125
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Vice Chairman Shelby:

As you begin consideration of a Fiscal Year 2015 appropriation bill for the agencies within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, I respectfully request support for the programs listed below. The funding requested for the national programs is to be spent at the agencies' discretion within the existing budget line and is not intended for any specific business, state, community or other entity.

Department of Commerce – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA)

1. Title: Salmon Management Activities

Account: National Marine Fisheries Service; Operations, Research and Facilities;
Protected Species Research and Management

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$30.2 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$30.302 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$6 million

Rationale: Programs including Expanded Stock Assessments, support for Regional Fishery Management Councils, increased funding for Observers, Bering Sea and Aleutian Island in-season groundfish management, Cooperative Research and Climate Regimes and Ecosystem Productivity are all critical to ensuring our nation's fisheries are well understood and managed, leading to sustainable economic prosperity for coastal communities. West Coast and Alaska king salmon runs continue an unexplained decline, resulting in federal fishery disasters being declared in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Elsewhere along the West Coast, salmon continue to be listed as endangered species. An additional \$6 million would return Salmon Management Activities to Fiscal Year 2012 and 2013 levels to ensure obligations in this program are met.

2. Title: Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

Account: National Marine Fisheries Service; Operations, Research and Facilities

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$65 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$50 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$15 million

Bill Language Requested: Modification to existing language that recognizes opportunities to use the fund for projects in support of conservation of salmon populations that are not listed under the *Endangered Species Act*. The change will not interfere with any programs currently conducted by the states and tribes that benefit from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. After "steelhead populations," insert "for restoration of populations."

Rationale: The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund was established by Congress in Fiscal Year 2000 to protect, restore, and conserve Pacific salmonids and their habitats. The request is the same as the Fiscal Year 2012 level to ensure adequate funding of the program. Funds are for conservation and restoration of Pacific salmon populations. State and local recipients of this funding will provide matching contributions of at least 33 percent of Federal funds. In addition, funds will be available to tribes, which do not require matching dollars.

3. Title: Hydrographic Survey Priorities & Contracts

Account: National Ocean Service; Operations, Research and Facilities; Navigation, Observations and Positioning

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$25 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$25 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$5 million

Rationale: Funding will reduce the current backlog of hydrographic surveys within navigationally significant areas like the Arctic as commercial activity expands and shipping safety and marine environmental protection become more important.

4. Title: Integrated Ocean Acidification

Account: Office of Oceanic Atmospheric Research; Operations, Research and Facilities; Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Research

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$6 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$14.922 million

Rationale: Ocean acidification threatens West Coast and Alaskan coastal communities, which economically rely on salmon and crab fishing and oyster mariculture, all of which are threatened by ocean acidification. Increased monitoring and research on the impacts of acidification, particularly on finfish larvae, are needed.

5. Title: Local Warnings and Forecast Base

Account: National Weather Service; Operations Research and Facilities; Operations and Research; Observations; Central Processing; Analyze, Forecast, & Support; Dissemination; Science & Technology Integration

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$475.74 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$476.360 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$6 million

Rationale: The additional amount requested would restore critical grants which support the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP). NTHMP allows NOAA to work with state and local populations to assess tsunami hazards, prepare local populations and mitigate potential tsunami damages. The grants allow NOAA to leverage state and local funds to ensure communities are properly prepared for tsunami hazards.

6. Title: Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, New Vessel Construction

Account: NOAA, Procurement, Acquisition and Construction, OMAO, Fleet Replacement, New Vessel Construction

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$0

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: +\$3.0 million

Rationale: The additional funds would allow for pre-acquisition activities (needs assessment and preliminary designs) for an Arctic-capable research ship. Many NOAA missions need to be conducted in the Arctic (fisheries surveys, hydrographic surveys, research to prepare for oil and gas development), but the agency has no ability to conduct at-sea research in the region for more than a few weeks a year.

7. Title: NOAA Corporate Services

Account: Program Support, Corporate Services

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted Amount: \$220.5 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$232.5 million

Rationale: The requested increase in the President's budget includes an additional \$12 million for reestablish the functionality of NOAA's Workforce Management Office and Acquisitions and Grants Services. Cuts to these areas have resulted in for lower levels of human resources and acquisition support than other similar agencies and deficiencies in these areas are harming the ability of the agency to perform its critical missions.

8. Title: Regional Climate Data and Information

Account: Office Oceanic and Climate Research, Climate Research

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$37.3 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$52.3 million

Rationale: The proposed increase will support numerous key improvements in NOAA's ability to provide regional-scale information, including an additional \$2.19 million for an Arctic Research Program. This will allow better information both within the Arctic, for instance on sea-ice extent and movement, and for the rest of the nation, including improved understanding of how Arctic changes affect weather in the rest of the U.S.

9. Title: Coastal Science, Assessment, Response and Restoration

Account: National Ocean Service, Coastal Science and Assessment

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted Amount: \$70.5 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$73.3 million

Rationale: The requested increase in the President's budget includes an additional \$1.3 million for Arctic spill preparedness, including improved understanding of behavior of spilled oil in ice-covered waters and identification of sensitive environmental areas. As oil and gas extraction activities expand in the Arctic, this sort of preparation is critical.

I also support funding requested for NOAA to begin to recapitalize its aging fleet of research ships. With an average useful life of 30-40 years, and 17-20 active ships, NOAA should be replacing ships approximately every other year. No new ship construction has been financed since 2009. Funding in Fiscal Year 2015 will allow NOAA to add hulls to existing Navy contracts for similar research ships, resulting in significant taxpayer savings. Funding after 2015 will not allow this multi-hull savings.

Department of Justice

1. Title: Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program

Account: Office of COPS, Supporting Law Enforcement Activity

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$180 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$247 million

Rationale: COPS provides grant funding for state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire officers and address public safety needs. Alaska has utilized the COPS program to hire full-time equivalent officer positions in communities where there have been gaps in law enforcement.

2. Title: Violence Against Women Prevention and Prosecution Programs

Account: Office of Violence Against Women

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$417 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$423 million

Rationale: The Violence Against Women Prevention and Prosecution Programs support efforts to combat and respond to violent crimes against women. The President's Fiscal Year 2015 proposal includes \$423 million for these programs to strengthen these efforts. This funding includes \$193 million for Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors (STOP) Grants to Combat Violence Against Women, \$27 million for the Sexual Assault Services Program, and \$11 million to reduce violent crimes against women on campuses. It also includes \$20 million for tribal victim services and \$10 million to address trafficking. This funding is crucial for community efforts to prevent and respond to violent crimes against women.

3. Title: Victims of Child Abuse Act

Account: Office of Justice Programs, Juvenile Justice Programs

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$19 million

Rationale: Provides for increased and effective prosecution of individuals who commit child abuse by providing competitively awarded grants to local Children's Advocacy Centers for center development through National Children's Alliance; and to the Regional Children's Advocacy Centers and the National Children's Advocacy Center for training and technical assistance for law enforcement and child abuse professionals.

4. Title: Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Program

Account: Office of Justice Programs; Justice Assistance, Evaluation and Statistics

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$30 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$25 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$20 million

Rationale: In Fiscal Year 2012, funding for RISS was reduced from \$45 million to \$27 million. RISS facilitates communication and information sharing to support state and local law enforcement agencies' investigative and prosecution efforts nationwide. Reduced funding levels inhibit the ability of RISS to provide important services to the country. Additional funding above the President's budget will help ensure the program remains effective.

5. Title: Bulletproof Vests Partnership (BVP) Program

Account: Office of Justice Programs, State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance, Justice Assistance Grants

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$18 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$22.5 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$7.5 million

Rationale: The Bulletproof Vest program helps provide law enforcement officers with lifesaving vests. I request that you provide a standalone funding level of \$30 million for the Bulletproof Vest program.

6. Title: Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne JAG)

Account: Office of Justice Programs; State and Local Enforcement Assistance

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$376 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015: \$376 million

Rationale: The President's Fiscal Year 2015 requested level of \$376 million for Byrne JAG is consistent with the Fiscal Year 2014 enacted amount. However, the President's Fiscal Year 2015 proposal includes new programs and financing, including \$22,500,000 for the Bulletproof Vests Program, to receive funding under Byrne JAG. As a result, the President's proposal would actually reduce total grant funding available under the program to states and local communities. I urge the Committee to maintain Fiscal Year 2014 funding levels for grants available under Byrne JAG by increasing the total amount for the bullet proof vest program as requested above. This crucial program allows states and local communities to use evidence-based solutions to address needs in the criminal justice system, including prevention, enforcement and prosecution.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Lindsay Kavanaugh, at (202) 224-1924 if additional information is required.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator